

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 11-24 are presently pending in this case. Claims 11, 15, and 17-22 are amended and Claim 25 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer by the present amendment. As amended Claims 11, 15, and 17-22 are supported by the original disclosure,¹ no new matter is added.

In the outstanding Official Action, Claims 18 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Misawa (Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2002-208900) in view of Tsubokura (Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2000-341593) and Connelly (U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 20020193066); Claims 11-14, 17, 19, and 21 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Misawa in view of Tsubokura and Connelly and further in view of Nakamura (Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2002-344842); and Claims 15, 16, and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Ikuo et al. (Japanese Patent Application Publication No. 2002-342351, hereinafter “Ikuo”) in view of Misawa and further in view of Tsubokura and Connelly. However, Claim 25 was objected to.

Applicants and Applicants’ representatives thank Examiner Perez for the courtesy of the telephonic interview granted to Applicants’ representatives on February 10, 2012. During the interview, Examiner Perez agreed that Claim 25 was objected to as including allowable subject matter.

Applicant acknowledges with appreciation the indication that Claim 25 includes allowable subject matter. In this regard, independent Claims 11, 15, and 17-22 are amended to include the subject matter of Claim 25, and Claim 25 is canceled without prejudice or

¹See Figure 11 and related description.

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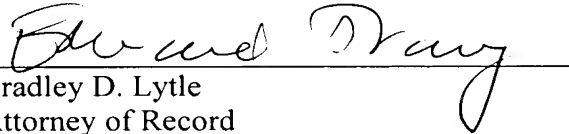
disclaimer. Accordingly, Claims 11, 15, and 17-22 (and all claims dependent therefrom) are allowable.

Accordingly, the pending claims are believed to be in condition for formal allowance.

An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bradley D. Lytle", is written over a horizontal line.

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